

House Rules Committee Chairman Louise Slaughter said that a bill approved overwhelmingly this afternoon would help seniors by undoing a physician reimbursement cut of 21 percent. The cut went into effect on June 1. Passage of the bill today sends the legislation to the President's desk for his signature.

"Making sure that the doctors who treat Medicare recipients are properly compensated is important both to the medical community and to the millions of seniors that rely on their care," Slaughter said today. "The House originally passed a measure that would fix this problem but we were unable to get the Senate to go along with it. I will say that I am disappointed in that because it means the House will have to revisit this issue again in six months but this issue had to be resolved."

Passage of H.R. 3962, Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and TRICARE families, extends for six months the Medicare Physician Payment Update. This bill retroactively reverses the 21 percent cut in Medicare payments to doctors, scheduled for June 1st

, and also provides, effective June 1st

, a 2.2 percent update to physician payments through November 30, 2010. (This provision also protects TRICARE families, because payment rates for doctors in TRICARE, the health care system for military personnel and their families, are tied to Medicare rates). The bill is fully paid for.

BACKGROUND

Medicare physician payment rates were reduced by 21 percent on June 1. This provision would reverse that reduction and instead retroactively provide, effective for all services provided on or

after June 1, a 2.2 percent update to Medicare physician payment rates through November 30, 2010. This provision is estimated to cost approximately \$6.4 billion over 10 years.